

Neighborhood Planning Assembly Draft Minutes



NPA:
(choose one)

Wards 1 & 8	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 4 & 7	Ward 5	Ward 6
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Date of Assembly : __9__ / __25__ / __19__

Start Time: (Commence): 7:00PM _____

Location: _____ Robert E. Miller Center _____

Finish Time: (Adjourn): _____ 9:00PM _____

Note taker: _____ Kelt Wilska _____

Steering Committee Members in Attendance: Erik Monson, Jeff Clark, Eric Corbman, David Driscoll, Ryan Frink, Jeff Comstock, Jenna O'Donnell

Discussion Topics

- Ground rules, introductions, and announcements
- Burlington Electric and net zero energy roadmap
- Housing Updates
- Electoral College presentation
- Updates from elected officials

Actions Taken / Decisions Made : N/A

Agenda Items and Actions:

Speak Out

- New North End community dinner, need more chairs next month
- Rock Point School Halloween race upcoming October 19th.

Burlington Electric (Darren Springer and Jennifer Green)

-BED History/Overview

- Big week to be here tonight. Lot of climate action happening. Climate strikes all over the world. City Council declared a climate emergency on Monday evening
- Many renewable energy projects. 3rd largest utility in Vermont.
- McNeil Woodchip is now largest energy producer
- 75% commercial electricity use, 25% residential
- 11 years without a rate increase
- We are the efficiency provider for the city of Burlington
- Using less electricity than in 1989
- Continuing to invest and saving roughly 12 million on customer bills because of efficiency
- 2014 became the first city to fully source energy from renewable generation
- #4 in the country for solar generation
- Entered net zero conversation from a point of strength
- Have a number of different incentive programs—charging stations, rebates on electric cars and bikes
- Next month Green Mountain buses have first 2 electric buses

-Net Zero Energy

- Where we want to be in the future
- Have a solid foundation
- Next big chapter is to transition away from fossil fuels in heating and transportation sectors
- Sent out requests for proposals and received 13. Hired Synapse, office in Burlington. Asked them to establish a baseline. Analyze pathways to net zero by 2030. Cost benefit analysis.
- Discovered that transportation is the largest portion of the pie. Buildings were second. Without non-Burlington customers, buildings rise to the top.
- Synapse crunched the numbers. If we keep using energy the way we are, we're not going to make a whole lot of progress.
- Not only a transition away from fossil fuels, also a reduction in greenhouse gases
- Synapse roadmap looked at four key elements: efficient electric buildings, electric vehicles, district energy (using steam from McNeil for energy), alternative transportation

-New Programs and Incentives

- Took immediate action steps upon releasing this plan. Offering rebates for first time to install cold climate heat pumps, also rebates for used electric vehicles
- Incentives alone don't get us where we need to go. Have been working to strengthen standards for energy efficiency in rental housing. Also need a supportive state and federal level as well. Optimistic that a number of these solutions can be offered cost-competitive today
- 80 cents on the dollar of a gas purchase leaves the state. Electricity: $\frac{3}{4}$ stays in the regional economy.
- dspringer@burlingtonelectric.com, jgreen@burlingtonwelectric.com

-Questions

Q: What is the city doing to bring new ways of generating electricity into the city?

A: Currently have an 80 Mw electric grid with more capacity. Currently doing an integrative resource plan. Signed a new hydro contract in Brattleboro. Looking at wind, solar, hydro.

Q: Do you have a map of where these charging stations will be?

A: Yes, on website. Adding many public and multi-family stations. CarShare also has an EV.

Q: Did you say you are now using the waste heat from McNeil?

A: Not yet, but part of the master plan.

Housing Update (Mayor Weinberger)

-Congrats on the community dinner

-Net Zero is one of the most exciting things happening right now

-We can get to net zero with the tech that exists already

-We're not going to get there unless most citizens want their homes and workplaces to undergo a transformation

-Housing

- Housing affordability is one of our largest challenges in Burlington
- We've launched a new effort since the spring with two housing summits
- Three elements to this effort:
 1. Preserving and furthering our accomplishment of building permanently affordable housing
 2. Strong code enforcement and tenant protection under Bill Ward (average response time to a complaint is under 48 hours),
 3. Housing market beyond the permanently affordable market. Can't solve affordable housing with subsidies and permanently affordable houses. Has become a national conversation. More houses being built, vacancy rate is going up. Nowhere where we want to be, but working on it.

- 5 areas focusing on after housing summits. Student housing not on list, but trying to reach a new agreement with UVM. Tenant protection and eviction protection also not on list. We're doing a lot of what these calls for increased protection ask for. CEDO is looking into new strategies to address this.
 1. Permanently increase funding for housing trust fund. Hoping to double funding and have it rise with inflation over time.
 2. Dual incentive utility costs. This work on weatherization has not been getting done because of split incentive. Making a minimum standard.
 3. Parking requirements are limiting housing supply. Not a prohibition on parking being required. Create a new transportation impact fee.
 4. Accessory dwelling units. Supposed to be legal everywhere.
 5. An effort to keep supply of long term rental units from being eroded by short-term Airbnb phenomenon

-This conversation will be ongoing. City Council will have a directional vote in October.

-Questions

Q: In the Fair Housing Complex, permit for marketable units increasing very quickly. Did they get permitting or did it just get added on? Never an add-on for affordable housing.

A: Rest assured that any new building goes through an extensive permitting process. Affordable units built first, market rate units came about later on over time. Someone asked about how so many commercial units are getting permitted while homeowners have so much trouble building additions on homes. New permitting department will help this. A new permitting center is under construction.

Response: Affordable housing is getting short-changed

Electoral College

1st Presentation

-Background on electoral college. Why do have the EC historically? Pros and Cons.

-Federalist 68: purpose of electoral college. Two reasons why framers thought it was a good idea.

1. Some democracy but not too much.

2. Place of small states in the electoral system.

-An argument can be made that the small state argument was skewed towards states with slavery.

-Pros: EC generally produces a clear winner. By and large the electoral college generally achieves this. Does preserve attention and influence of small states. Localizes contested elections.

-Cons: Contingency plan: what happens when someone does not win a majority? (House chooses president, senate chooses Vice President). Popular loser. Small states still get ignored. For minor party and independent candidates, amplified victories are much more damaging.

2nd Presentation

-We are not a democracy. "A republic if you can keep it."

-Three combined elements: democracy, republicanism, federalism

-President only elected official that represents all of us.

-Nation of states.

-2016 election stats prove why the framers put the EC in place

-What makes the national popular vote compact unconstitutional? Sidesteps constitution.

-Two ways to amend the constitution. Constitutional convention or convention of states

3rd Presentation

-Vermont law

-Certificates of election are provided to the electors nominated to the winner of the state's general election.

-In 2011, Vermont passed the National Popular Vote Act and joined the NPVC. Compact doesn't take effect until majority of electoral votes have entered into the compact.

-Political parties in each state nominate electors. When you vote for president, you are also voting for their party's electors. Awarding electoral votes. Two methods: winner take all and proportional by districts

-Questions

Q: How is the number of electors from each state determined?

A: By congressional district. 10 year census comes into play here

Response: There isn't any reason why the NPVC is unconstitutional.

Answer: Interstate compact isn't in place until voted by congress

Q: If a district gets gerrymandered, does it affect the general election?

A: Only in Maine and Nebraska

Q: Any modifications being looked at to give more power to these smaller parties?

A: Not really. Winner take all silences these smaller parties.

Q: How do we get more people to vote?

A: Civics in schools, talking to neighbors. Registering through drivers licenses.

Q: Can an independent candidate get elected?

A: Theoretically, yes. Practically, no.

-Voting is important. Encourage young people to vote. More academic literature coming out about the demise of democracies.

Elected Officials

-Climate change issues. Passed a resolution that committed city to net zero by 2030.

-Drafted resolution to continue tree plantings

-Thank you for coming together as a community

-7 million dollars coming to Burlington

-595 million dollars went into transportation and infrastructure

-The state has a 5,000 dollar signing bonus for someone moving to Vermont and getting a job with a state employer

-School district is in the process of building. Scaling back.

-School central office has had some branches reorganized. New HR director. Changes to business office.

-GMT update, laid off the bus driver for not following protocol after racial bias incident but then rehired.

-Questions:

Q: For Ali: What was your reason for voting to disarm our police officers?

A: Not framed correctly. This was brought up as an idea to explore and not as a direct request to police officers.

Adjourn: 9pm